

Poland's Solidarity Movement and the Global Politics of Human Rights

In the historiography of human rights, the 1980s feature as little more than an afterthought to the human rights breakthrough of the previous decade. Through an examination of one of the major actors of recent human rights history – Poland's Solidarity movement – Robert Brier challenges this view. Suppressed in 1981, Poland's Solidarity movement was supported by a surprisingly diverse array of international groups: US Cold Warriors, French left-wing intellectuals, trade unionists, Amnesty International, even Chilean opponents of the Pinochet regime. By unpacking the politics and transnational discourses of these groups, Brier demonstrates how precarious the position of human rights in international politics remained well into the 1980s. More importantly, he shows that human rights were a profoundly political and highly contested language, which actors in East and West adopted to redefine their social and political identities in times of momentous cultural and intellectual change.

ROBERT BRIER is a historian focusing on the intersection of international relations and intellectual history in the late twentieth century. He was Senior Researcher at the German Historical Institute in Warsaw from 2008 to 2015 and taught International History at the London School of Economics from 2015 to 2018.

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For Pati, Ella, Vincent, and Paulina

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None of the chapters listed below has been published previously. Earlier and much abbreviated versions of some of the arguments made in Chapters 3–6 have been published as “Poland's Solidarity as a Contested Symbol of the Cold War: Transatlantic Debates after the Polish Crisis,” in Ken Weisbrod and Kiran-Klaus Patel, eds., *European Integration and the Atlantic Community* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); “The Helsinki Final Act, the Second Stage of *Ostpolitik*, and Human Rights in Eastern Europe: The Case of Poland,” in Rasmus Mariager et al., eds., *Human Rights in Europe during the Cold War* (London, New York: Routledge, 2014); “Beyond the ‘Helsinki Effect’: East European Dissent and the Western Left in the History of the ‘Long’ 1970s,” in Rasmus Mariager, et al., eds., *The “Long 1970s”: Human Rights, East-West Détente, and Transnational Relations* (London: Routledge, 2016). Some of the materials on which Chapters 2 and 8, respectively, are based were used to inform different arguments in “From Civil Society to Neoliberalism and Armed Intervention? Reflections on the Human Rights Legacy of ‘1989.’” *European Remembrance and Solidarity Studies* 3 (2014), 165–188; “The Court of World Opinion: Eastern Europe and Latin America in the Late Modern Global Public of Human Rights,” in Valeska Huber and Jürgen Osterhammel, eds., *Global Publics: Their Power and Their Limits, 1870–1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

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Note on Geographical Regions

Throughout the text, the term “Eastern Europe” refers to the formerly Communist dominated part of Europe, while “Western Europe” denotes the non-Communist part. Thus, Austria, Greece, and Turkey were West European countries even though they lie partly or fully East of countries like the former states of the GDR and Czechoslovakia. The term “Central Europe” denotes the cultural and geographical region comprising the Baltic states, Poland, the current Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary.

Note on Cited Primary Documents

This book draws on published and unpublished primary sources coming from five different countries, each with its own system of referencing sources. Document descriptions have been adapted to the form used in British and US historical monographs only where possible. Most document descriptions have been left in their original form as have been the places where they have been found (*Mappe* in German archives vs. *File* in American ones). This way, everyone working in these archives should be able to identify the cited documents. Wherever archivists paginated documents in an archival unit, these page numbers are given in the footnotes using the abbreviation “fol.” (folium/folia). Abbreviations used in the footnotes for archives and their holdings can be found in the bibliography.

Abbreviations

AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labor and Congress for Industrial Organizations
ASFP	Association Solidarité France-Pologne
CDM	Coalition for a Democratic Majority
CFDT	Confédération française démocratique du travail
CGT	Confédération générale du travail
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
CSS	Committee in Support of Solidarity
DGB	Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund
EC	European Community
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
ILO	International Labour Organization
KOR	Komitet Obrony Robotników (<i>Committee to Defend the Workers</i>)
KSS “KOR”	Komitet Samoobrony Społecznej “KOR” (Committee for Social Self-Defense “KOR”)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NSC	National Security Council
NSZZ	Niezależny Samorządny Związek Zawodowy (<i>Independent Self-Governed Trade Union</i>)
PAC	Polish American Congress
PATCO	Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization
PRL	Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa (People’s Republic of Poland)
PZPR	Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza (<i>Polish United Workers’ Party</i>)
RFE	Radio Free Europe

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RL	Radio Liberty
ROPCziO	Ruch Obrony Praw Człowieka i Obywatela (<i>Movement to Defend Human and Civil Rights</i>)
SB	Służba Bezpieczeństwa (<i>Security Service; under Communism, a division in the Ministry of the Interior responsible for state security, intelligence and counterintelligence and thus for the surveillance of the domestic opposition and the émigré groups in the West</i>)
SDUSA	Social Democrats U.S.A.
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands
TKK	Tymczasowa Komisja Koordynacyjna (<i>Provisional Coordinating Commission; Solidarity's underground leadership between 1982 and 1987</i>)
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNCHR	United Nations Commission on Human Rights
USIA	United States Information Agency
WCL	World Confederation of Labour